

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PARIS 15368 01 OF 02 122259Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----087965 122314Z /65

R 122226Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1507
INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
USMISSION USNATO
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 15368

EXDIS

USEEC

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: FR, PO, US
SUBJECT: GISCARD VISIT TO PORTUGAL

1. SUMMARY: GISCARD WILL MAKE FIRST VISIT TO PORTUGAL SINCE IT BECAME A DEMOCRACY, ON JULY 19. GOP AMBASSADOR IN PARIS EXPECTS FRENCH MAY TAKE SOME STEPS TO IMPROVE BILATERAL ATMOSPHERE -- INCLUDING PERHAPS EVEN SOME RECONSIDERATION OF FRENCH CONSORTIUM LOAN. END SUMMARY.

2. PORTUGUESE AMBASSADOR TO FRANCE, COIMBRA-MARTINS (PROTECT THROUGHOUT) HAS OFFERED EMBOFF BITTER-SWEET ACCOUNT OF CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH WILL SET STAGE FOR FIRST VISIT BY FRENCH HEAD OF STATE TO PORTUGAL SINCE CHANGE OF REGIME. AS NOW FORESEEN GISCARD VISIT WILL TAKE
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PLACE JULY 19.

3. STUDENTS OF FRENCH-PORTUGUESE RELATIONS WILL RECALL THAT GISCARD HAD SO FAR DISPLAYED AVERSION TO PUBLIC GESTURES TOWARD PORTUGAL. AMONG EXPLANATIONS FRENCH OFFERED WERE GOF'S TRADITIONALLY CLOSER RELATIONS WITH SPAIN, WHOSE PROBLEMS HAD PRIORITY;

GISCARD'S QUIRKY DISLIKE FOR PORTUGUESE IN GENERAL;
AND, MORE TO THE POINT, THE POLITICAL FACT THAT GOF
GESTURES TOWARD SOARES, HOWEVER WORTHY PERSONALLY, WOULD
HAVE BEEN EXPLOITED BY THE PS BEFORE THE RECENT FRENCH
ELECTIONS AND CAUSED GISCARD TROUBLE WITH THE RPR. THE
US FELT THE IMPACT OF THIS TILT IN OUR OWN, NOT TOO
SUCCESSFUL EFFORTS TO GET GOF TO MAKE MORE THAN A TOKEN
UNTIED CONTRIBUTION TO THE PORTUGUESE BALANCE OF PAY-
MENTS CONSORTIUM.

4. SHORTLY AFTER THE FRENCH ELECTIONS AND THE FORMA-
TION OF A NEW LEFT/CENTER SOARES GOVERNMENT IN LISBON,
MARTINS SAYS HE BEGAN TO GET SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT VIBES.
THESE CULMINATED WHEN ELYSEE SECRETARY-GENERAL
FRANCOIS-PONCET SOUGHT HIM OUT SOME WEEKS AGO TO SAY
THAT GISCARD HAD IN FACT NOT BEEN AS DEAF TO
MARTINS' LONGSTANDING EFFORTS TO ARRANGE A GISCARD
VISIT TO LISBON. INDEED, TIME MIGHT NOW BE "QUITE RIPE"
FOR A PRESIDENTIAL VISIT IN MAY. FRANCOIS-PONCET ADDED
THAT, FRANKLY, SUCH A VISIT WOULD FIT IN WELL WITH
GISCARD'S OWN NEW POST-ELECTION DOMESTIC POLICY OF
"OUVERTURE;" AND THAT A NUMBER OF ISSUES WHICH HAD BEEN
AT DEAD CENTER MIGHT THEREFORE NOW ALSO BE SUSCEPTIBLE
TO RECONSIDERATION.

5. TO MARTINS' INFINITE CHAGRIN, PRESIDENT EANES,
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STILL NETTLED BY GISCARD'S STAND-OFFISH BEHAVIOR IN
THE PAST, DID NOT SNAP AT THIS OPPORTUNITY, WHICH,
MARTINS POINTS OUT, OFFERED THE ADDED ADVANTAGE OF
SHOWING OF THAT GISCARD NOW WANTED TO VISIT PORTUGAL
BEFORE REPEAT BEFORE GOING TO SPAIN. INSTEAD, EANES
RASED SCHEDULING PROBLEMS, WHICH, IN TURN, IRRITATED
THE ELYSEE. AS A RESULT, WHILE THE GISCARD VISIT IS
NOW FINALLY ON, IT WILL NOT TAKE PLACE UNTIL JULY 19,
I.E., AFTER GISCARD'S VISIT TO MADRID, WHICH AN ELY-
SEE SOURCE SAYS IS NOW FIXED FOR THE END OF JUNE.

6. MARTINS, WHO HAD LUNCH ON THESE QUESTIONS WITH
SOARES AT ORLY ON MAY 11, NEVERTHELESS EXPECTS THE
VIST TO PRODUCE RESULTS:

-- FIRST, ELYSEE HAS HINTED THAT GOF MIGHT, TO AN
EXTENT, RECONSIDER ITS POSITION ON THE FRENCH CONSTRI-
BUTION TO THE PORTUGUESE LOAN CONSORTIUM;

-- SECONDLY, MARTINS EXPECTS A DISCUSSION OF AN

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 PARIS 15368

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EXPANDED FRENCH ROLE IN "MODERNIZING" THE PORTUGUESE
ARMED FORCES;

-- THIRDLY, HE EXPECTS GOP MAY ASK GISCARD FOR SUP-
PORT FOR EUROPEAN CREDITS WHICH WILL BE NEEDED FOR
PORTUGUESE TRANSITION INTO THE COMMUNITY;

-- FOURTHLY, AGENDA WILL HAVE COMMERCIAL ASPECTS,
INVOLVING AUTOMOTIVE DEALS (RENAULT), NUCLEAR GENERA-
TION (FRAMATOME), ETC.;

-- FIFTHLY, AFRICA WILL BE AN IMPORTANT THEME; AND

-- LASTLY, GOP WILL URGE THAT FRANCE AGREE NOT TO
PRESSURE PORTUGUESE LABOR FORCE TO RETURN. HOWEVER,
PORTUGUESE LANGUAGE TRAINING SHOULD BE GIVEN TO CHILDREN
OF PORTUGUESE WORKERS IN FRANCE TO GIVE THEM OPTION OF
COMING BACK TO PORTUGAL.

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7. COMMENT: ALL THE FOREGOING, MARTINS EMPHASIZES, IS
STILL IN "PRELIMINARY INTERNAL DISCUSSION STAGE." WE
OURSELVES ALSO RESERVE JUDGMENT UNTIL A MORE PRECISE
FRENCH ASSESSMENT REGARDING AS YET UNANNOUNCED GISCARD
VISIT CAN BE OBTAINED.
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